



PRESS RELEASE

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Celebrating 17 Years of Turning Minefields into Vineyards

Kabul, Afghanistan – Representatives from the U.S. government, the Afghan government, and the international community planted a tree today, during Landmine Awareness Day, to symbolize the turning of mined agricultural land into land that is now producing high value crops. The tree will represent the shared hope of the Afghan and American people, as well as the international community for the removal of all explosive remnants of war from the fertile soils of Afghanistan and turning these lands back into the agricultural lands that will help create a peaceful and profitable future for Afghanistan.

For the past 17 years, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been revitalizing agriculture in Afghanistan. In 2002, prime agricultural land was heavily mined. After years of planting fruit and nut trees, grape vines and other produce that is highly valued in regional markets such as India, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, Afghan produce has returned to the world market, earning exporters over \$800 million in 2018. Exports of fruits, nuts and spices are on target to bring \$1 billion to Afghanistan by the end of 2019. This also provides an opportunity to spread the benefits of peace to more communities that are impacted by strife.

With USAID support, Roots of Peace has planted over five million fruit trees in all 34 provinces in Afghanistan, impacting over 1 million farmers and families. This is re-establishing the livelihoods of farmers and helping them to earn higher incomes. These crops also get higher prices in the world market, thereby providing greater income for exporters, processors and producers.

The Chief Executive of Afghanistan, the State Minister for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs, the Assistant Chief of Mission from the U.S. Embassy, the Director of Afghan Mine Action Coordination and the CEO/Founder of Roots of Peace attended the event.

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With almost \$19 billion spent on development programs in Afghanistan since 2002, USAID provides the largest bilateral civilian assistance program to Afghanistan. USAID partners with the Government and people of Afghanistan to ensure economic growth led by the country's private sector, to establish a democratic and capable state governed by the rule of law, and to provide basic health and education services for all Afghans.

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years."



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